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SCIENCE

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THE CHANGE FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW BOTANY IN THE UNITED STATES¹

It is generally known that in the seven-
ties there was a sudden development of the
study of botany in this country. Just how
and why this sudden development took
place at that particular date is, I suspect,
not clearly recognized, at least by our
younger men. From histories and reports
of progress they can learn the main facts,
but those who, as students or instructors,
have lived through the transitional period
when the old botany was changed into the
new are in a better position to appreciate
the underlying causes. There are, how-
ever, few such persons still living and the
small number is not wholly due to the nor-
mal death rate. The relative number of
botanists was smaller then than now and it
will not do to assume that this was owing
solely to the lack of attractions in the bot-
any of the day. The main reason was that
one could hardly expect to earn a living
as a botanist. When I graduated from
college in 1866 and wished to become a
botanist, Professor Gray told me that I
ought to study medicine first because the
possibility of gaining a living by botany
was so small that one should always have
a regular profession to fall back upon. In
fact, at that time medicine was practically
the gate through which it was necessary
to pass in order to enter the field of bot-
any. Some years later De Bary told me
that, when he was a young man, there was
a similar state of things in Germany and,
although desiring to devote himself to bot-

MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for
review should be sent to Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Garrison-
on-Hudson, N. Y.

¹ Address of retiring president of the Botanical
Society of America, given at the Botanists' Dinner,
Cleveland, January 1, 1913.